



# *CITY COUNCIL*

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## *Committee of the Whole*

Monday, August 10, 2009

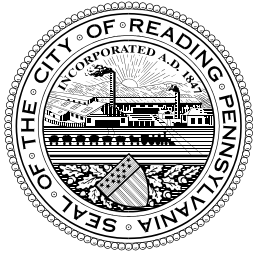
Council Office

6:00 pm

Agenda

I. Agenda Review

6:00 pm



# ***COMMITTEE of the WHOLE***

## ***CITY COUNCIL***

**MINUTES**  
**July 27, 2009**  
**5:00 P.M.**

### **COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:**

D. Sterner, S. Marmarou, S. Fuhs, V. Spencer, M. Baez, J. Waltman

### **OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

L. Kelleher, S. Katzenmoyer, C. Younger, C. Heminitz, R. Hottenstein, C. Kanezo, M. Mayfield, T. Iaeger, W. Rehr, T. Votsay (Hill)

Mr. Spencer called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

### **I. RESOLUTION – RESIDENTIAL SPRINKLER SYSTEMS IN PA UCC**

Ms. Mayfield reported that the PA Fire Code Officials have been reviewing the PA UCC. She stated that they would like to see residential sprinklers required in all new construction in PA. She stated that the Home Builders Association is lobbying to have this removed from the draft PA UCC. She stated that the Fire Code Officials are trying to garner support from their local municipalities to show their support to State officials as the review process continues. The Fire Code Officials would like residential sprinklers to remain in the PA UCC when adopted by the State in 2009.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if this would be for new construction only. Ms. Mayfield stated that it would.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if existing homes would need to add sprinkler systems. Fire Marshall Iaeger stated that there is no requirement to retrofit existing homes.

Mr. Spencer questioned who was sponsoring the Bill. Ms. Mayfield stated that the Code is not yet in Bill form but that the issue must be decided before the end of 2009.

Mr. Spencer questioned what a cost estimate to add this to a building project could be. Mr. Iaeger stated that other upgrades suggested by home builders are more costly than the sprinkler system. He stated that these other items are suggested more often than sprinkler systems but are not lifesaving items.

Mr. Spencer stated that most of Reading's housing would not be affected by this issue. He questioned what the benefit to Reading would be. Mr. Iaeger compared this update to the past issue of smoke detectors. He noted how many lives have been saved by smoke detectors. He stated that there was also this same type of lobby group opposed smoke detectors. He stated that this would benefit Reading as old housing stock is replaced making City residences safer. Chief Rehr described current practices of home builders. He stated that much construction is now completed using glues and plastics and that these items will melt quickly. The walls and roofs will collapse much more quickly and this will put the lives of residents and firefighters at a greater risk.

Mr. Spencer questioned if this would affect Habitat for Humanity homes. Mr. Iaeger stated that it would.

Mr. Spencer questioned if it would affect Our City Reading homes. Mr. Iaeger stated that it would not as this is rehabilitation, not new construction.

Mr. Marmarou questioned how this would affect homeowners insurance. Mr. Iaeger stated that the property owner would receive a discount for having the system.

Mr. Iaeger described the characteristics of a fire containing many plastic items. He stated that the smoke will be thick and black and that the heat is much more intense. He stated that under these circumstances a resident would have 1 – 3 minutes to evacuate. He stated that this is basic fire science. He stated that by installing sprinkler systems every home has its own firefighter on duty 24/7.

Mr. Sterner questioned who would regulate pricing of the systems. Mr. Iaeger stated that current testimony by lobbyists is based on facts that have been disproven. He stated that the Home Builders Association is clearly overestimating the cost to home buyers. He stated that this item would be negotiated during the construction process as

all other items are negotiated. Chief Rehr stated that the average cost is \$2 per square foot. Chief Rehr and Mr. Iaeger stated that this provision is the best thing that could happen to PA residents.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if the systems needed regular inspections. Mr. Iaeger described the standards used for installation. He stated that inspections are not mandated as the systems will continue to be in working order as long as they are not damaged or altered. Ms. Mayfield added that this item would be added to health and safety inspections as needed.

Mr. Spencer questioned when the State legislature would be taking a vote on this issue. Ms. Mayfield stated that it is currently in committee but that approval must be taken before the end of the 2009 calendar year. She stated that it is the Fire Department's hope that Council will support this issue and relay their support to the City's State legislators.

Mr. Spencer questioned if the City's legislators have been contacted about this issue. Ms. Mayfield stated that it was her plan to contact them with this resolution of support.

Mr. Iaeger reminded Council that the final version enacted by the State is the version that the City must follow. He stated that this is a proactive position to improve the City's housing stock as deteriorating housing is replaced. He stated that the safety of City residents now depends on the response time of the Fire Department. This would greatly decrease risks to residents and to firefighters.

## **II. SELECTION OF DELEGATE TO REPRESENT THE CITY ON THE COUNTY TAX COLLECTION COMMITTEE**

Mr. Spencer questioned the requirements for the delegate. Mr. Hottenstein stated that the Administration recommends Tax Manager Cindy Weidel as the delegate. Ms. Kelleher stated that to date, 50% of those submitted were elected officials and 50% were staff. Mr. Hottenstein again stated that the Administration recommends Cindy Weidel as the delegate and Carl Geffken as the alternate. He stated that these staff members have the experience and expertise necessary.

Mr. Fuhs stated that he supports the Administration's recommendations.

Mr. Mooney arrived at the meeting at this time.

Mr. Waltman questioned if the State set requirements for the delegates. Mr. Hottenstein stated that they did not.

Mr. Mooney stated that much information on this issue is on the DCED website.

Mr. Younger stated that the City has until September to name its delegate.

Mr. Waltman noted the need for Ms. Weidel to know the position of Council as she participates in the Committee.

### **III. WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT UPDATE**

Ms. Hoag and Ms. Klepper joined the meeting at this time.

Mr. Mooney stated the need for Council to enter executive session for this discussion as it would involve possible litigation.

Council entered executive session at 5:32 pm. Council exited executive session at 6:42 pm.

### **IV. AGENDA REVIEW**

Council reviewed this evening's agenda including the following:

- Resolution establishing the position of Business Analyst

Mr. Spencer questioned a response to his memo. Mr. Hottenstein stated that a response memo has been sent.

Mr. Spencer stated that a resolution needed to be added to this evening's agenda hiring a police officer.

The meeting adjourned at 6:57 pm.

Respectfully Submitted  
*Linda A. Kelleher, CMC*  
City Clerk